EINSTEIN’S TESTIMONY BEFORE THE ANGLO-AMERICAN COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY ON PALESTINE

WASHINGTON DC – JAN 11, 1946

Mr. Aydelotte: Do you think the United Nations or some other outside authority should force the Arabs to allow unlimited immigration into Palestine, or do you think they should take the Arab point of view into consideration and close off immigration? Just what do you think should be done with Palestine by whoever power has the trusteeship over it?

Einstein: There is a great difficulty with the refugees. Of course, there should be something done about them. I believe it is natural to bring the bulk of them to Palestine. In Palestine the Jews who are already there will take care of the ones that are brought in. I believe that such kind of action should not be taken from a political standpoint but from a human standpoint. It would be best for the people of Palestine to feed those people and take care of them. I believe it is quite natural that they can take into their homes people who have no place to stay.

Mr. Aydelotte: What would you do if the Arabs refused to consent to bringing these refugees to Palestine? Suppose the Arab population were prepared to resist it by force; would you compel them by force to receive the refugees?

Einstein: That would never be the case if there were no politics. But there are not only Arab politicians but Jewish politicians as well.

Mr. McDonald: would you eliminate the Jewish and Arab politicians both?

Einstein: No, you cannot eliminate them. If you eliminate one, ten others grow up in their place.

Mr. Aydelotte: An Arab was talking this afternoon before you came in, and he is a man who has lived in Palestine the greater part of his life. He contends that the Arabs are afraid and they need no instigation to resist Jewish immigration. They are afraid that the Zionists are trying to develop a majority in Palestine so that they will have political control. Of course, the Arabs are in the majority now, but they fear that the Jews may attain a majority and then they would be in the minority.

Einstein: But who has created that mentality? If the people work together, they will not care anything about the idea of who has the biggest number. The number doesn’t count if it is not politically activized. Nobody is interested in how many people in the United States speak French, German, English or Italian. It is all in the minds of the people.

Mr. Grossman: Do you believe that what you have complained about has been caused by the British in Palestine?

Einstein: I do not say that is the the British alone.

Mr. Grossman: No, but you feel that the state of mind to which you refer is not there?

Einstein: I do.

Mr. Grossman: And do you think the state of mind is currently there to produce people who are willing to accept each other?

Einstein: No.

Mr. Grossman: but they are shooting each other.

Einstein: Yes.

Mr. Grossman: Is it a figment of the imagination of newspaper editors or is it a fact?

Einstein: Yes, they are shooting each other over there.

Mr. Grossman: then the state of mind is sufficient for shooting

Einstein: No, you see, what is happening now in Palestine is that , of course, they see their mother and father and brother being sent out of Europe and the government takes over their country, and there is no place left for them to go.

Mr. Grossman: But from the point of view of the British, the motive does not affect you. Suppose you were to reverse the situation and allow unrestricted immigration into Palestine, and allowed the Jews to come in, is it just a British imperialistic fiction that suggests to you that the Arabs might shoot?

Einstein: No it not a fiction.

Mr. Grossman: It is not a fiction, it is a fact. But if you were to recommend sending the Jews there to Palestine despite the danger of the Arabs shooting .

Einstein: I believe that danger is not so great as some people think it is.

Mr. Grossman: Then, under this terrible British imperialism, this terrible British realism, the people in Palestine will be stimulated to further shooting.

Einstein: Oh, no, it will not be bad.

Mr. Grossman: Oh, it is not going to be so wicked from now on?

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Mr. Grossman: But in the past, you think that the British have aroused such hatred that the Arabs will now continue to hate the Jewish immigrants but will not shoot them

Einstein: Yes.

Mr. Grossman: You think the British are so clever that they can control to a degree the hatred of the Arabs for the Jews, but that the Arabs will not shoot them?

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Mr. Grossman: You are certainly a great admirer of my country. Another question: Since the British are, according to your point of view, completely incompetent to rule in the various parts of the world where they have ruled –

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Mr. Grossman: Well, at least in Palestine – you say they should not rule Palestine. Would you be prepared to advocate publicly that the American people should take over the mandate and assume full military responsibility for unlimited Jewish immigration, and thereby prove –

Einstein: No, I would not do that. I would be King of Palestine if I did that . God forbid.

Mr. Grossman: Your point of view is that you wish to blame the British, and you are not prepared to suggest that the other great democracies, since we have failed, should take responsibility for carrying out the job which we have failed to do . We have failed, according to you. Why shouldn’t you take the responsibility and show how wrong we are?

Mr. McDonald: When he says “you,” he means the United States.

Mr. Grossman: Yes, the United States.

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Mr. Grossman: Well, what soldiers should go there to Palestine to carry out the American policy?

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Mr. Adelotte: What is your attitude toward the idea of a political Zionism, a political Jewish state, as versus a cultural center? There are two conceptions of Palestine. You understand them.

Einstein: Yes, I was never in favor of a state.

Judge Hutcheson: It has been told to our committee by the Zionists that the passionate heart of every Jew will never be satisfied until they have a Jewish state in Palestine. it is contended, I suppose, that they must have a majority over the Arabs. It has been told to us by the Arab reps that the Arabs are not going to permit any such condition as that, that they will not permit having themselves converted from a majority to a minority.

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Einstein: Yes, absolutely. The state idea is not according to my heart. I cannot understand why it is needed. It is connected with many difficulties and a narrow-mindedness and a narrow-mindedness. I believe it is bad.

Judge Hutcheson: Isn’t it spiritual and ethical – I do not mean this particular Zionist movement, i do not mean the idea of insisting that a Jewish state must be created – isn’t it anachronistic?

Einstein: In my opinion, yes, I am against it – but not for the same reasons that Mr. Rosenwald has stated.

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Mr Buxton:: Professor, in your general impeachment of British colonial rule, you did not quite explain why it is to the interest of the British to stir up strife over a country where the responsibility of governing the country rests with them. Why should they make their own task more difficult?

Einstein: If people are united with each other and they come to the idea that they do not need the foreign rule, then they want to make themselves independent. Evey country with a decent standard of living will have, of course, its idea and will strive forward. So an enduring rule is not impossible if you keep down the burden of the people. That is my thesis.

Mr. Aydelotte: What you are saying is not very convincing because the British nation has for a long time specialized in bringing independence to other nations, and has given independence to a large number of colonies which they formerly ruled. Of course, the British do not rule Palestine. They have a Mandate.

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Mr. Crum: I should like to have you accept my statement on the basis of personal experience with this Commission. Our British and American colleagues are doing everything in their power to find a speedy solution to the Palestine problem. I for one think it wrong for you, as citizen of the world, to say that this committee is a smokescreen because, believe me, sir, it is not.

Einstein: How can you know it is not?

Mr. Crum: I know it from my own activities.

Einstein: Yes, but you estimate it is not a smoke-screen. I believe the Colonial Office makes it that.

Mr. Crum: May I suggest, Doctor, that you judge us by the actions following the recommendations of the committee.

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